

CPYRGHT

*Cuba and Politics*

It is disquieting that the fate of 1000 Cubans has been injected into the New York senatorial campaign—or into politics of any sort. James B. Donovan, the Democratic candidate, happens to be the man who is negotiating with Fidel Castro for the release of the prisoners captured in last year's debacle at the Bay of Pigs. He is said to be acting in a private capacity, with no formal government support.

Now comes the news that Sen. Jacob Javits, the Republican incumbent, is being given secret briefings by the CIA on the Cuban negotiations. The implications are troubling. If Mr. Donovan is not acting in behalf of the Government, why is it necessary for the CIA to brief Mr. Javits? And if Mr. Donovan is acting with the unofficial support of the Administration, why is he running for office and thus forcing an implicit confirmation that he is an agent for Washington?

Whatever the merits of the prisoner negotiations, it is unfortunate that the question has become mingled with politics. Suppose the Cubans are freed before the election. The suspicion will exist, fairly or not, that the United States has paid a bribe to the Castro regime at least in part to help publicize a candidate for office. This may be highly unfair to Mr. Donovan, but his conflict of roles is bound to arouse misgivings. A man involved in delicate foreign negotiations should not simultaneously insert himself in the tumult of an election campaign.